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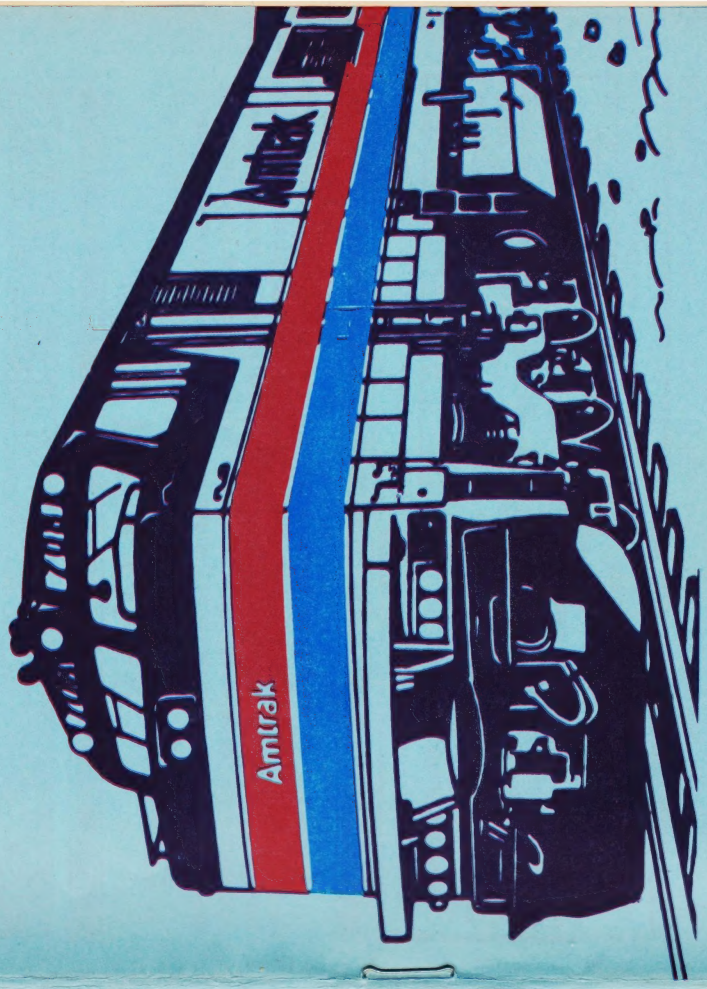
VOL. 11 NO. 2
FEBRUARY 1981
ISSUE NO. 217

2-26-81

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS



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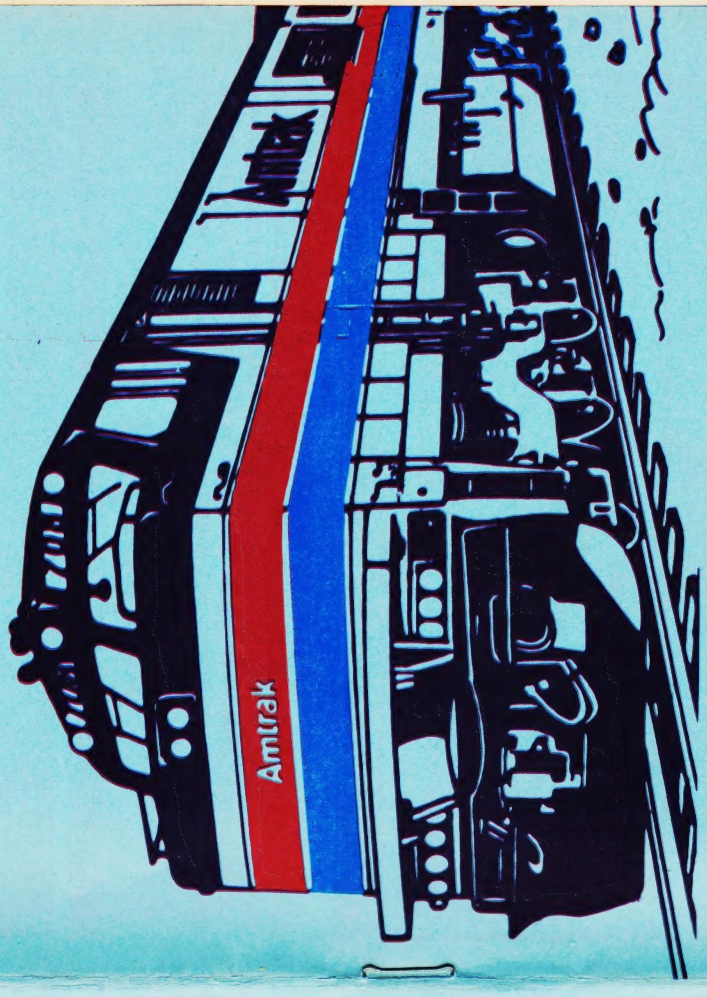

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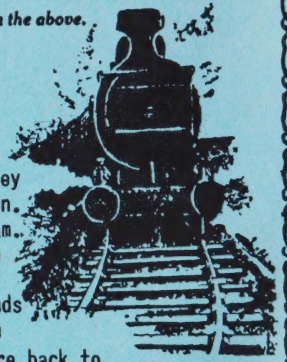

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ON THE COVER

An Amtrak artist's conception of an Amtrak P30 diesel engine, built by General Electric. This particular drawing appears on a plastic ruler-calendar evidently made for the use of travel agents and other ticket agents. The complete drawing is seen on our rear cover--three Superliner cars behind the engine 708, a consist which might appear on some short distance trains running out of Chicago.

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Rail Travel News, Vol. 11, No. 2. February, 1981. Whole number 217.

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $18.00 per year; single copy 75¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

LETTERS

One hundred years ago, 1881, generally marks the year that U.S. railroads replaced car stoves with steam heat, and it appears that steam heat will vanish this year. It lasted only a century.

Jeff Wetmore
Emeryville, California

Good that some things do not change. Humor remains in RTN with the continued appearance in print of Peter Putnam Bretz. "Last Steam Run on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED" has just got to be the funniest he has ever written. Keep up the good show, Pete! (See RTN #215).

James Miller
Dixon, Illinois

I fear Pete Bretz was shivering too much from his cold slumbercoach when he reported being held for a freight account a broken rail at "Ingles, Ind.," (RTN 216, p. 7). Unless Conrail has renamed a siding, I can't verify such a place exists, and believe me over the years I've checked out all rail locations beginning with that letter combination. The timetable I used for reference lists Muncie at mp 229.6, then Hart (232.7), Yorktown (235.3), Daleville (240.0), Gridley (245.7) and Anderson (247.4). I'd be more than tickled if Pete can correct me. And I do envy him those Rochester (PA)-Steubenville (OH) and Columbus-Indianapolis mileage segments.

J. David Ingles, Managing Editor, Trains
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

(A typo changed Ingalls to Ingles--Editor.)

Having been an employee of Amtrak for just short of eight years and reading RTN for at least five of those, I'm writing this letter in hopes that it will be printed and read by other Amtrak employees.

For the last 4-5 years, my attitude towards Amtrak was at a low with little morale or enthusiasm towards the corporation for its lack of concern and effort for the public and its employees. Amtrak was sponging off federal funds and abusing its employees in ways that couldn't be described in an entire issue of RTN, for lack of room. My "high" for Amtrak and rail passenger service was disillusioned and came to a close end many times.

For two years I stayed off any Amtrak trains until just recently when I attempted to try the Superliners on train 14, the COAST STARLIGHT. Upon boarding, as pass-riders we were greeted with proud smiles. Our sleeping car attendant showed us the entire sleeper and detailed the positive aspects of a Superliner sleeper. The diner was excellent, with service at an all-time high! The crews were happy and also pleased with the coaches and the entire train. Announcements were made as we passed certain points of interest and each stop was announced 10 minutes prior to arrival. We saw passengers thanked for taking the train by crew members and new ones boarding welcomed. Both I and the ticket agent I rode with were amazed. This wasn't the Amtrak I knew. This was professional and impressive and a new Amtrak.

The Superliners are here now, and I hope Amtrak people all make an effort to realize their potential and reflect Amtrak's pride before selling a ticket, while on board and when saying goodbye. We now have the best and most modern mode of transportation in the world, and we must utilize any impressions made to members of Congress, the press and the general public. This is our real beginning, and I'm glad my thoughts and impressions of the Amtrak idea are reversed for the better. I'm happy to be a part of Amtrak again!

Jonathan Nestor, Amtrak Ticket Clerk
Santa Barbara, California

T-RAIN

The rain is raining all around
It falls on field and tree
It rains on the umbrellas here
And on the SFZ.
(With apologies to Robert Louis Stevenson.)

The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR headed for Chicago is 5 minutes out of Oakland, sporting its full Superliner consist on a Jan 22 day that brought heavy rain to break a long period of relative drought. RTN photo.

★ RAILS CAN RELIEVE OUR TRAVEL NIGHTMARE ★

by Alan S. Boyd

CONGRESS HAS demonstrated its interest in high speed rail passenger lines in selected corridors. By February, Amtrak must fulfill a congressional mandate to provide more specific information on each of the corridors identified, including the Texas Triangle corridor between Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.

A planning session was held in October, sponsored by the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M at which I had an opportunity to discuss our Texas rail corridor proposal with a wide range of political, business and community leaders.

A Texas Triangle rail passenger corridor would be a most important development for Texas, especially at a time when energy-related problems and high costs are already tending to reduce travel and the communications which are so vital to the economy of any fast growing region. We need to do something positive to reverse that trend.

A traveler recently returned from Europe noted that for something less than $1.6 billion the French were completing a 242-mile electrified railway line between Paris and Lyon for 160 mph operation. Rail passengers will be able to travel that route in two hours comfortably, at low cost and without consuming petroleum. It is the same distance, 245 miles, between Houston and Dallas. Why can't we ride a modern train to Dallas in comfort, for a reasonable price and without worrying about the cost and availability of gasoline — and do it faster than the automobile?

The is a perfectly reasonable question. If we were going to design a railway from scratch, as the French have done, this is the way we would begin. We would connect any two large metropolitan areas — directly. Today, however, because we must operate over an inherited system designed for other purposes in other times Amtrak passenger trains travel 345 miles to make this 245 mile trip and take 8 hours and 50 minutes to do it. That is about 38 miles per hour! I am sure there are many who recall, in 1938 when the "Sunbeam" ran the more direct, 265-mile route, in 265 minutes every day. I am sure there are many who would like to see us do that well, or better, today. We are not contemplating anything beyond the "state-of-the-art" technology for either vehicle or railway. In Japan they have been traveing like this for 16 years.

In many American cities today high cost and congestion — congestion on highways, airports and airways — make travel a nightmare. The only way to relieve traffic jams, bottlenecks, airport waiting and airway holding delays is to give the traveling public the alternative to get out of their cars and aircraft and into something better. Relief will not come from building more highways and more airports because in the very places where they are needed most — in urban areas — there is no more space. High-speed, multifrequency rail passenger systems have many other attractive advantages. If other nations have been investing in first-rate rail passenger services, why aren't we? What are the advantages? Why don't we have this choice of a superior alternative in Texas?

A recent survey by the European Economic Community finds:

"The railways are capable of playing a uniquely valuable role: often greater than that of other modes of transport . . . in a world menaced by a growing energy crisis. Because of its unique technical characteristics (steel wheel on steel rail and movement in convoy) rail is particularly modest in energy consumption; no car or bus can match the speed and comfort of the intercity services; and with electric power it can use any form of primary energy."

What does it take to build a modern rail passenger corridor system? First of all it takes money. And where can that money come from? Let's take a suggestion from the prestigous National Transportation Policy Study Commission: "Highway capital needs total $900 billion, in 1975 dollars, through the year 2000." That is $900 billion to keep the present highways as they are during the same period when that commission forecasts that passenger travel will double and freight movement will triple.

Now, is it the better part of wisdom to drift along on that conventional heading consuming that kind of money and the oceans of petroleum which it implies? Or, would it not be better to set aside a small fraction of that to create a superior alternative and at the same time to permit the transition of passengers to another, more efficient mode which will be relatively unobstructive and which does not need to consume petroleum? The question shapes its own reply. There can be no reasonable alternative if we dedicate ourselves to the continued commercial development of the Texas Triangle region.

It was the German economist Frederich List who once wrote, "It is not commerce that creates traffic: it is traffic that creates commerce." An overcrowded, costly, congested and endangered transportation system hinders the growth of a society and the Texas Triangle must not be one of those parts of the world afflicted with that malaise.

Back to our question: what does it take to make a super-railway system? It takes a more direct route with slight gradient and gentle curvatures; it takes trains of modern cars; it benefits from modern locomotives to reduce cost and reduce the consumption of petroleum; it must provide for safe grade-crossings; and the supporting systems for communications, operational effiiciency and safety must be the best. It is our plan to provide for operation up to 79 mph and begin service with three trains a day, each way.

Around the world the leading industrialized nations now operating such systems tell us there are four fundamental characteristics of such a system: frequency, higher speed, more through trains and a general enhancement of comfort and convenience. In all of these systems safety is found to be a fundamental characteristic of the railroad business. For example: The Japanese Shinkansen "Bullet" trains have carried 1.5 billion passengers in 16 years without a single casualty.

This last point is not to be ignored or neglected. It may well be the key to the whole scheme. A recent report from the Office of Technology Assessment, an agency of the Congress, confirms that the 29,800,000 million vehicles involved in 17,600,000 crashes in 1977 caused 4,392,000 injuries and 47,700 deaths at a gross cost of $44 billion. If there are any who are not persuaded, by my other reasons, that a railway passenger corridor between Houston and Dallas, as part of a Texas Triangle, makes good sense, these highway holocaust figures ought to provide the clincher. A savings of any appreciable part of that dollar loss would pay for the corridor, and the saving of lives would more than confirm the wisdom of the decision.

We see no reason why the American traveler should not be able to enjoy the railway alternative, when he chooses, as

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those in other countries are able to do today. All Texans and all Americans have never accepted the role of second best in any field of endeavor. A super-railway passenger corridor, by all standards, is tops.

(Amtrak President Alan Boyd wrote the above for the Op-Ed page of the Houston Chronicle, where it appeared on Jan 4 under the title, "The Texas Triangle Rail Corridor.")

WHITE HOUSE PLAN TO CUT AMTRAK SEVERELY IS LEAKED TO PRESS

President Reagan's newly-appointed director of the Office of Management and Budget, David Stockman, has prepared a "black book" of cuts in federal aid, and these were leaked to the press in early February, and from there circulated among Senators and Congressman. The Washington Post was the first to publish an account of the planned cuts in Amtrak (and the Postal Service), in its Feb 9 edition.

OMB's plans are to require Amtrak to cover much more of its expenses from passenger fares than Congress has up to now required. At the present, Amtrak covers 41.1% of its costs from passenger revenues, according to an Amtrak spokesperson, and present legislation requires Amtrak to increase that percentage to 50% by the end of Fiscal Year 1985. OMB would have that timetable accelerated so that 50% is covered by the end of FY 1982. After that the required percentage would increase each year in 10% increments, so that 60% must be covered by the end of FY 1983, 70% by FY 1984, and 80% by the end of FY 1985. In addition, each Amtrak route will be required to meet these criteria, rather than an average over all routes. Routes that do not meet the specified revenue criteria would be cut out of the system. In 1982 about half of the short distance routes and a third of the long distance routes would have to be dropped under these requirements, the Post article indicated. The Post said that the "black book" made estimates of fare increases that would be needed on various routes. They ranged from 26% for New York to Florida, up to 394% for Washington to Cincinnati. These fare hikes would then meet the 1982 requirement of 50% coverage from passenger revenues.

Amtrak told RTN that the corporation would not comment on the report, since it hadn't seen the full report anyway. Amtrak evidently does not aim to get into a dispute between the White House and Congress at this time. But Amtrak VP-Government Affairs Lawrence A. Gilson told the Post that no other industrialized nation has a passenger system that is as economically efficient as the White House demands. "In the best, most efficient service in the world you might find one or two trains that meet that goal", Gilson told the Post. "The decision has got to be made whether the government is going to continue to support passenger rail service as every other industrialized nation does.

The OMB document stated that "Passenger trains, while part of the country's heritage and history, have little place in a federal budget which is heavily in deficit." It called Amtrak subsidies a "grossly inefficient use of tax dollars, especially when train travel represents only about 1% of intercity travel."

The document attacked Amtrak's energy efficiency: "(Amtrak) is not particularly energy-efficient because of low passenger load factors, especially outside of the Northeast Corridor. Passenger trains are likely to become comparatively less efficient as automobiles and airplanes make major improvements in fuel economy."

The White House wants to cut $25 million from this year's Amtrak appropriation, going up to a cut of $900 million in FY 1985. Next year's cut would be $400 million.

The National Association of RR Passengers issued a "red alert" to its members. NARP said its position would be that the Amtrak system is now efficient, after the cuts made in 1979. Debating on a route by route basis is not appropriate, it said.

RAIL CANADA

A SENATE INVESTIGATION of the Transport Ministry and the Canadian Transport Commission has been called for. On Jan 27 Transport 2000 Canada called for the investigation of the two government bodies because of their "sabotage thru neglect of the nation's rail passenger services." Guy Chartrand, T-2000 national president, stated that "as witnessed in the Christmas peak-season near-collapse of VIA Rail services (see last issue), and its efforts to sustain these with equipment up to 40 years old, the Ministry and the Commission have a great deal to answer for. By starving VIA Rail of backing and funds, they are forcing it to use equipment and technology that would embarrass a banana republic. At this very moment Canadian aid is assisting impoverished Third World states with modern locomotive and passenger car fleets, while at home Canadians have to put up with antiquated museum pieces.

"The Ministry and the Commission are now operating with a sense of priorities that are hostile to the well-being of the Canadian traveling public. The Senate Transport Committee is well-qualified to undertake an immediate investigation to cover the following points:

(1)Why has the MOT consistently failed to give VIA Rail the means to institute a modern and reliable passenger service when virtually every modern industrialized state recognizes the value of such a system? It should be ascertained as to what influences are at work within and upon this ministry that cause this continuing outcome.

(2) In its recommendation subsequent to the transcontinental hearings in 1976, the CTC emphasized the antiquated nature of rail passenger equipment and the need to replace it by new, cost-effective and comfortable trains. Now, at this critical juncture, the failure of the CTC to enforce these recommendations appears to coincide with the MOT's aim of letting rail passenger service effectively die, particularly to the West and to the Maritimes, with consequent impact on the bonds of the nation.

(3) Why has VIA Rail not been given the responsibility and powers to perform fully its role as a Crown Corporation? Why has MOT not allowed VIA Rail to act as a responsible Crown Corporation in the same manner as it has allowed Canadian National and Air Canada to do?"

Mr. Chartrand commented, "The aviation and highway systems are force-fed over $3 billion of the taxpayers' money each year, while passenger rail is starved of new equipment. Unless these problems are quickly resolved, Canadians will soon be robbed of an effective passenger train system that is essential to the nation in our petroleum-short future."

★ ★ ★

ONTARIO PREMIER DAVIS on Jan 27 announced a 5-year economic plan for the province. Among its features are: (1) Starting a plan to electrify the GO Transit rail system, with the Oakville-Pickering line being changed over first; (2) Increasing subsidies to cities that use or are changing over to electricity in their transit systems; (3) increasing funding of the Urban Transportation Development Corporation by $30 million, to open a production facility in Kingston; (4) Constructing a $90 million Intermediate Capacity Transit System along the Toronto waterfront with stations at Ontario Place, the CN Exhibition grouns, the CN Tower, and Massey Hall; (5) Assisting the federal government in improving the Windsor-Quebec City rail corridor, with the province spending $125 million on Windsor-Toronto; (6) Supporting a new ferry service between Oshawa Harbor and New York State by establishing an Ontario Harbor and Small Ports Commission with a $10 million yearly budget.

VIA RAIL CANADA has installed devices to help communicate with blind and deaf persons. A teletype will have access to a free long distance line, as will a "visual ear" (by Bell Canada), according to Rejean Bechamp, head of VIA planning and development.

THE BUSIEST PARTS of the Christmas-New Year's period were marred by thousands of passengers being trapped on delayed VIA trains, with some arriving up to nearly 40 hours late. Many services, even on shorter-distance routes, arrived between 6 and 12 hours behind schedule. Said Transport 2000 National President Guy Chartrand, "This situation is an insult to Canadians, and a dangerous one where rail passenger services are so essential to the energy-short future." Chartrand called for an investment in 220 passenger cars and 35 locomotives to re-equip the longer-distance routes. "The cost of this would only be $230 million, which is a drop in the bucket compared to the ".5-3 billion of the taxpayers' money spent each year on highways, or against the hundreds of millions spent annually on capital improvements to airports. A single example is the $234 million which MOT proposes to spend on expanding a single airport, Vancouver International. The same amount spent on passenger rail equipment would provide modern, comfortable and reliable passenger trains to the whole nation." Chartrand also wanted a report on the degree to which equipment breakdowns, lack of cooperation from the railways, and other factors prevented VIA from performing adequately during the holiday period.

THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE" will be back on the Seattle-Victoria run this spring, with the first trip on May 8, from Seattle. Seattle departure is 8am with a noon arrival in Victoria. Returning, the ship leaves at 5:30 and reaches Seattle at 9:30pm. The steamer has been refurbished, and its entrance is said to give the effect of a grand ballroom in a hotel. The roundtrip fare is $25 U.S. funds--no increase over last year, when the unsuccessful "Victoria Princess" and a Boeing hydrofoil were placed on the route. The "Marguerite" is nearing the completion of a $4.5 million refit which includes installation of sewage holding tanks.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S plan to cut back on mass transit funding casts a pall over the public transportation scene. The Wall Street Journal (Feb 13) lists mass transit backers as among those who must "brace for losses" and may "accept a big cut in Carter's spending plan." As a Los Angeles Times writer sums up the scene: "Subways are out, Amtrak is in trouble, downtown people movers are nearing the end of the line and fares are headed skyward." Office of Management and Budget director David A. Stockman has indicated that $450 million of Carter's mass transit budget should be cut out, and that federal money should be spent only on rail projects that are at least 50% completed already.

THE LOS ANGELES downtown people mover is in limbo at the moment. DOT secretary Drew Lewis has been noncommital to Los Angeles officials over whether it will be funded, and promises to have a decision within a 2-month deadline period. But L.A. supporters feel it's not going to be funded. The city's planned Wilshire Blvd. subway, its other major transit project, may get no funds either. Under present Reagan administration plans, money will be distributed to local areas for them to use at their discretion, and with more involvement of the private sector in transit funding. (A "transit-impact" tax on businesses that profit from the proximity of public transit is one idea being considered in Washington to raise local money.) The people mover was planned to be built for the 1984 Olympic Games and to help revitalize L.A.'s downtown area. It was to be funded 80% by UMTA, but now that seems most unlikely.

TRANSIT OPERATING GRANTS will be cut only minimally, promised DOT secretary Drew Lewis. He said that he would not recommend any cuts in the present fiscal year, and only a "very slight" cut in fiscal 1982

NEW YORK'S MTA will ask for a $25 million bank loan to keep Long Island Rail Road and three Conrail commuter lines in operation for the last half of March, until April 1 when state funds can again be used.

AN APPELLATE COURT must give the final decision on whether the half-cent transit tax voted by Los Angeles voters last Nov 4 is legal under the provisions of California's Proposition 13. But state Attorney General George Deukmejian on Feb 10 gave his opinion that it is unconstitutional. The tax, designed to assist in operating expenses of the Southern California Rapid Transit District, must still be collected until an appellate court decision is handed down.

THE "EL CAMINO", the domed train purchased by Baxter Ward and Los Angeles County in 1974, was to be the heart of a proposed L.A.-Oxnard commuter rail service. But the Board of Supervisors, which no longer includes Ward, on Feb 5 withdrew its support of a petition to the Public Utilities Commission to approve startup of the service, in a case against SP. Caltrans has indicated that it will "aggressively pursue" the case on its own, however. The equipment itself was earlier put in the hands of Caltrans to thwart county efforts to sell it off.

SAN DIEGO TROLLEY line testing was to have begun on Jan 26, but on that date the engineering forces at the Naval Base station were having problems with the wiring, and said that hopefully testing would begin the following week.

CHICAGO SOUTH SHORE & South Bend Railroad and the Sumitomo Corporation--the Japanese company building the new South Shore equipment--ran a test train using a two-car ICG Highliner set on Jan 25 between 115th Street (Kensington) and Hegewisch, Illinois. Testing was for vibration and sound control.

ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT Authority's chief Alan Kiepper has turned down an offer to become general manager of the Southern California Rapid Transit District this month. The position would have increased his salary from $68,000 to $90,000 or more yearly, but Kiepper said the uncertainty of transit funding in L.A. led him to reject the offer.

DOT SECRETARY LEWIS said on Feb 9 that he supported the controversial Westway highway project in New York City.

NORTH WESTERN STATION in Chicago will be the topic of a public hearing Feb 13. The Friends of the North Western Station are optimistic that it will achieve landmark status and be saved from demolition. The group needs donations. Membership is $10 a year (or more) to PO Box 6239, Chicago IL 60680.

VIOLENCE ON BUSES has suddenly become an issue in the San Francisco Bay Area, with an AC Transit driver and a San Francisco Muni driver killed within the past month. At 10am on Feb 10 all Bay Area transit systems stopped for 5 minutes in tribute to the two victims, at the time of the funeral of the Muni driver. No BART trains were in the trans-bay tube or the Berkeley hills tunnel at the time of the transit halt.

A LATE REPORT on the funding of the Los Angeles people mover indicates that DOT secretary Lewis considers it a prime candidate to cut from the transit budget.

DEREGULATION OF BUS industry is supported by a New York Times editorial (Feb 10). While noting that "Bus deregulation won't work miracles. A ride on the bus will still be a ride on the bus", the paper states that deregulating intercity buses will provide a healthy market for local carriers.

GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT in Marin County, California, has increased Golden Gate Bridge tolls from $1 to $1.25 as of Mar 1, and bus fares will rise 16% Apr 1. Ferry service toLarkspur from San Francisco will be trimmed to cut costs.

THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS ROLLS AGAIN
by Adron F. Hall

New Orleans is known for its party atmosphere. The party the afternoon of Feb 4 moved out onto the train platforms of New Orleans Union Passenger Station and into the "new" diner-lounge car of train 58, the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS. Actually the PANAMA LIMITED had become the CITY on Feb 1 with the issuance of the new Amtrak schedules. But New Orleans wanted to officially christen their train in the style to which they are accustomed.

Amtrak president Alan Boyd was on hand with New Orleans mayor Ernest Morial for the occasion. Also present were several other Amtrak officials and workers, Dejan's Olympia Brass Band, and a small crowd of well-wishers from the community of rail passenger advocates. The band wouldn't fit in the "party car" so a pretty pianist-singer from famous Pat O'Bryan's in the French Quarter was jazzing up the crowd who barely had elbow room to sip their cups of Cafe Mardi Gras. That's a drink on the CITY's new menu--it's concocted of Irish coffee, vodka and rum.

The PANAMA LIMITED had first rolled on the Illinois Central in 1914 to carry passengers from Chicago to New Orleans where they would continue their journey by ship via the Panama Canal to points west and the Orient. Bill Williams, a flagman of 41 years' experience and still working the train, recalled the early days on the IC. "Then," he said, "the people in the PANAMA sleepers were the money people." But the migrant workers, musicians and card sharks rode the CITY. They "raised more hell; they had a good time," he said.

After disembarking from the lounge three cars from the rear of the train, the mayor and his entourage and Mr. Boyd and company were accompanied to the rear of the train near the bumper post of Track 4 for the christening ceremony. They were paraded along by the shenanigans of the Olympia Brass Band, and even some dancing couples who were obviously enjoying the Cafe Mardi Gras.

Mr. Boyd and the mayor gave appropriately short speeches because "we're going to get this train out on time," the lighted drumhead was unveiled, and the christening commenced. Mayor Morial, Mr. Boyd and ex-Lt. Governor Fitzmorris christened the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS with a bottle of champagne and two bottles of water--one from the Mississippi River, the other from Lake Michigan.

With that, mayor Morial, his wife and company boarded and waved from the rear vestibule as the train departed. Their journey would take them to the first stop in Hammond, Louisiana.

The consist of the train was: engines 723, 709 (P30's); cars 1214 baggage, Amcoaches 21827, 21856, 21848, 21878, 21862, Amdinette-lounge 28305, and sleepers 2983 "Pine Arroyo" and 2454 "Redwood Grove."

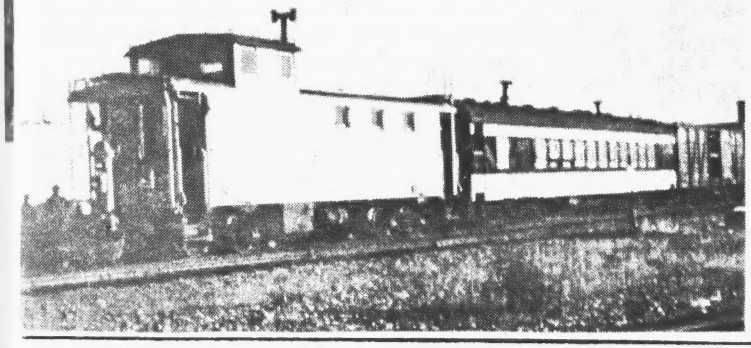
NEWFOUNDLAND: A NARROW GAUGE MIXED TRAIN
By David Ribbe

VIA's system timetable lists trains in an east-west order. The page with the easternmost train schedules, however, does not list any VIA trains. It contains schedules for buses and trains operated by Terra Transport, Ltd., a company which in 1980 took over the operation of all Canadian National transportation services on Newfoundland Island, ferryboats excepted. A bus connects with the night ferry from North Sidney, Nova Scotia at Port-aux-Basques and goes to the capital and largest city at the eastern end of the island, St. John's, an all-day, 500 mile trip. The four trains listed operate over scattered sections of the CN Railway. The timetable does not indicate that they are mixed trains and that the tracks are narrow-gauge, only 3ft, 6ins apart.

At the CN Marine ferry terminal in North Sidney is an information booth sponsored, it appears, by a group of Newfoundland Island Chambers of Commerce. Our schedule showed that we had a 14-hour layover in a place called Corner Brook,

about which we knew next to nothing except that it is the island's second largest city. At this booth I requested information about what one might do to amuse oneself in Corner Brook while waiting for the passenger train. The information man looked at me incredulously and said that all passenger trains on the island had been discontinued some time back. I begged to differ, showing him my brand new Sep 29, 1980 VIA timetable. He said he didn't care and pulled his own VIA timetable from under the counter and looked at it. It said the same thing mine did, and I reminded him that it was published by an agency of the federal government. He said that that didn't make any difference because he knew good and well that there were no passenger trains on Newfoundland Island. I next pulled out the train tickets which I had purchased from a VIA ticket office in Moncton: round trip for two between Corner Brook and Bishops Falls, Nfld. on trains 204 and 203. He assured me that they were worthless. I asked if he really thought that the Canadian Government would concoct such a fraud on unwary travelers. Again he insisted that they were worthless, but wished us luck in his best "You'll find out" voice. So much for what to do in Corner Brook.

Train no. 204 originates in Port-aux-Basques and is made up of cars ferried across the Cabot Strait from Nova Scotia. Each car must be lifted off its standard gauge trucks and placed on narrow gauge ones. It still looks very much like a CN operation, but occasionally we spotted an engine or freight car sporting the Terra Transport logo.



Train 204 at Windsor, Newfoundland on Oct 14, 1980. CN heavyweight coach 758 made up the passenger portion of this mixed train. Photo by the author.

In Corner Brook we inquired about the location of the train station and were directed to the CN freight yard. A clerk came out of the yard office and when he learned what we were there for, invited us in. He was very kind and said that we could leave our luggage there while we were walking about town and that we could come back and wait for the train in the office out of the cold and intermittent rain later on, since the train did not leave until 1:30am.

Being a railroad enthusiast himself, he gladly answered all the questions he could about the narrow gauge railway. There is no passenger station in Corner Brook, he told us. Passengers are supposed to board at some grade crossing about 1½ miles north of the yard near the gypsum plant. The management did not really want people boarding at the yard because of the shunting that continually goes on there; but people do anyway.

Train 204 arrived from Port-aux-Basques at about 11:30pm on this Oct 14 date. We boarded the coach, which the shunter had just taken off the late-arriving no. 203 from Bishops Falls, and we were added to the rear end of 204 along with a bunch of boxcars and a caboose. We asked several people why a coach was added to this particular 136-mile section of the mainline run, and the answer was always the same: for hunters and berrypickers. The hunters are generally after moose, and the pickers after blueberries and partridgeberries. The only section of the mainline that does not roughly parallel the Trans-Canada Highway is within this stretch. The railroad takes a shortcut over a divide thru roadless and sparsely inhabitated wilderness.

(continued on p. 19)

NEW YORK STATE SEEKS TO FINISH REBUILDING ADIRONDACK RAILWAY LINE

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Said the announcement: "The $1.65 million obtained by the state from EDA in 1978 plus nearly $1 million in state funds have proved insufficient to complete the work of restoring the line.

"Before applying for the additional funds, DOT submitted a report which reviewed the progress of the rehabilitation program to date and accounted in detail for all EDA funds spent. The funding called for by the original grant agreement was based upon cost estimates made in 1975 and 1976. However, inflation, startup delays and unanticipated additional work more than doubled the anticipated costs.

"In agreeing originally to help fund the restoration of the railroad, the EDA was not only interested in the economic stimulation to be realized by the region from expanded tourism, but also in creating as many new local jobs as possible with the rehabilitation work itself. For this reason, much of the work was to be labor-intensive. Restoration of the railroad was urged by the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, the Black River-St. Lawrence Economic development Commission and the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board and strongly endorsed by local governments throughout the area.

"Accordingly, New York State entered into an agreement in 1977 with the Adirondack Railway Corporation--a newly-formed company comprised in part of local investors. ARC agreed to carry out the government-funded rehabilitation work and, with private capital, to acquire train equipment and operate passenger service.

"Approval of the State's request for a supplemental EDA grant will make it possible to accept bids from efficient, mechanized organizations capable of finishing the remaining restoration in one construction season. DOT feels that the line should be brought up to previously planned standards as quickly as possible so that reliable tourist operations can begin.

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over 16,000 passengers having been carried in addition to the 10,000 carried during the winter Olympics.

"Trains have not been running on the line since October 1980 when the ARC operated weekend excursions over the rehabilitated portion of line between Lake Placid and Old Forge during the fall foliage season. Track conditions south of Old Forge have prevented trains from operating between Utica and Lake Placid since August.

"The first 22 miles of the Utica-Lake Placid trip is over Conrail's Lyons Falls branch. The 118-mile state-owned line connects near Remsen. When rehabilitation is complete, the 109 miles to Saranac Lake will meet Federal Railway Administration Class 3 standards, permitting passenger train speeds of up to 60mph. The nine-mile track segment between Saranac and Lake Placid, on which rehabilitation is virtually complete, meets FRA Class 2 standards which permit 30mph top speed.

"State DOT has asked that EDA act upon its request promptly so that bids can be received before the beginning of the 1981 construction season this spring. EDA approval of the request is contingent upon the continued endorsement of the three regional economic development agencies."

The State does not have money available to put toward the job itself. At the end of December the State DOT reported that "More than three-quarters of available funds for road and street projects and nearly all of the rail bond funds approved by the state's voters in Nov 1979 already have been committed to specific projects." In the state's progress report for 1980 were listed the following intercity passenger rail projects: (1) High-speed rail improvements south of Schenectady, soil-stabilization, 75% complete--$5 million of 1979 Bond funds; (2) High-speed rail service, Albany to Buffalo, track, signal and interlocking improvements, $20 million, specific improvements currently being identified and detailed, design expected to begin in mid-1981.

Said DOT Commissioner William Hennessy, "The electorate approved the issuance of $400 million for rail and transit needs. Of the $130 million intended for rail freight and intercity rail passenger service improvements, $62 million has been committed for specific projects and other projects are under review for possible inclusion in the program. Most of the remaining $270 million in state rail bond funds, and an additional $300 million in Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority bond funds, have been earmarked for specific commuter rail and transit projects which are in various stages of construction, design or planning."

New York is evidently interested in developing the Lake Placid area. For the 1980 Winter Olympic Games a sports facility costing $100 million was constructed. To determine how to use the facility in the future, a consultant prepared a study that was released just before Christmas. It recommended that a quasi-public authority be set up to promote the use of the sports facility. The Committee that organized the Olympic Games at Lake Placid is faced with an $8.5 million deficit, and Congress voted in December not to help relieve that bill with a proposed $2.7 million appropriation.

These facts would seem to make it politically infeasible for the state to put in more funds for the repair of the railroad running into the Lake Placid facility. But the state needs and wants the line available and appears to be defending it against allegations made in a Utica newspaper recently that the funds for rebuilding the line were mismanaged by the Adirondack Railway (see also RTN 215, p. 21). With gasoline expected to reach near $2 a gallon by this summer, it would be very useful to have a railway available for carrying tourists into the resort area.

Adirondack Railway train at Lake Placid. Peter Bretz photo.

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Adirondack Railway train at Lake Placid. Peter Bretz photo.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE WORST STORM so far this winter hit the Midwest and the Northeast beginning around Feb 10. Illinois had 10 inches of snow. Amtrak said that the severe weather was causing trains such as the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to run slower in certain locations. In the case of the SFZ, it was losing about an hour by the time it got to California, but would gain most of that back on its padded schedule on the Western end of its route. An Amtrak spokesperson said that as of Feb 12 there had been no major disruptions of Amtrak service due to the storm. The MONTREALER was disrupted by washouts the night of Feb 11, and passengers had to be bused each direction between Springfield and White River Junction. (The MONTREALER was also hit by a wildcat strike on the B&M Railroad, but we didn't have the details yet of how the problem was handled.) Reports are that Amtrak's electified cars are having no particular difficulties in the winter weather, but water storage tanks in the cars tend to freeze when they are in a very cold area for some time.....

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EMERGING CORRIDORS REPORT of Amtrak is scheduled to go to Congress probably the week of Feb 16. On Feb 18 President Reagan will give his final budget recommendations. With the present Amtrak system being so threatened by the White House, how will the report on new corridors be received? Amtrak's Annual Report is also under preparation now and should go to Congress and the Administration at about the same time as the corridors report.....

AMTRAK'S NOVEMBER RIDERSHIP is given in this issue on page 21. The full report for December is not available yet, but Amtrak said that overall ridership was up 2.2% that month, compared to Dec 1979.....

AMTRAK'S BOARD MEETING in January, which was held in Coronado, California instead of the usual Washington location, apparently produced nothing very notable. The February meeting is scheduled for the 25th, probably in Washington.....

STATE OF FLORIDA and Amtrak are holding talks on starting up a 403-b run between Miami and Tampa. The train would run via West Lake Wales, Bartow, Mulberry and Durant, and would use Amfleet cars. A July 1 startup date is possible.....

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ALL TWELVE SPV'S of Amtrak and the State of Connecticut were withdrawn from service last Dec 26 and returned to the Budd plant in Philadelphia for repair and modifications. On-the-road failure of the units was high. On Christmas Day, three SPV runs broke down before reaching their destinations. Currently, all New Haven-Springfield runs are being covered by RDC's and two-car Amfleet trains. Needless to say, thru service New York-Philadelphia is not being run. Budd reportedly hopes to have the railcars back in service by the second or third week of February.....

EMPIRE BUILDER CARS involved in the derailment of May 6, 1979 near Kennewick WA (see RTN #192) have been cut up by a Eureka MT scrap dealer. Included among the scrapped cars was dome coach 9461. The exact number of cars involved is unknown...

TWO COAST STARLIGHT consists of conventional cars, including a twin-unit diner, are reported in storage in the Seattle coach yards, one set on the rip tracks.....

THE INTER-AMERICAN will get a special fare promotion for the period Mar 1-Apr 26. During this time all travel on that train to or from Texas points will be eligible for a $5 return trip fare, plus the regular one-way fare. This information will not be in the ARTS computer until shortly before it takes effect.....

1981 STEAM SCHEDULE for Union Pacific-Western Pacific 3985/8444 follows: Apr 25: Cheyenne-Green River; Apr 26: Green River-Salt Lake City; Apr 27: layover in Salt Lake; Apr 28: Salt Lake-Elko; Apr 29: Elko-Portola; Apr 30: Portola-Oroville; May 2: Oroville-Sacramento, for display at California RR Museum opening. The above are all one-way deadhead moves. The following are passenger moves, all one-way except where noted: May 11: Sacramento-Oroville; May 12: Oroville-Portola; May 13: Portola-Winnemucca; May 14: Winnemucca-Elko; May 15: Elko-Salt Lake; May 17: Salt Lake-Pocatello; May 18: Pocatello-Boise; May 19: Boise-Weiser roundtrip; May 20: Boise-Pocatello; May 21: Pocatello-Green River via Montpelier; May 22: Green River-Cheyenne. The train will be double-headed by 3985 and 8444 and will consist of UP/WP passenger equipment. The California State Assembly on Feb 13 voted 54-1 to ask President Reagan to make the dedication speech for the opening of the museum in May, since he as governor signed the 1971 law that established the museum. (The one dissenting voter commented that Reagan was railroading the whole country and didn't need a museum to do it.).....

MORE SUPERLINER CARS have been delivered to Amtrak. On Jan 27 five sleepers were received, bringing the total to 28; on Jan 28 five diners arrived, bringing the diner total to 30. And nine lounges at last count have been received since our last issue. The first Sightseer lounge ran on the COAST STARLIGHT northbound from Los Angeles on Feb 9 (after having originally been scheduled to go on Feb 8). It came from Chicago on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, leaving there, in service, on Feb 5. Three more lounges were scheduled to go on the STARLIGHT the following three days at Los Angeles, equipping all four STARLIGHT sets with the new Sightseer cars. More lounge cars are expected to be delivered by the time our next issue appears. The photo above is of one of the last runs of conventional equipment on the COAST STARLIGHT--train 11 photographed Jan 20 a few miles south of San Jose, at milepost 51. Consist of the train is: engines 642, 523, 535; cars 1114, 1551, dome 9482, 4483, dome 9485, 4534, dome 9478, 4893, dome 9350, 8096, 2670 "Silver Terrain", and 2660 "Silver Meadow". Photo by Gene Hines.....

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TWO AMTRAK AEM-7 locomotives in the NE Corridor had problems recently. Engine 900 (at the FRA test facility at Pueblo CO) and #901 developed hot boxes and because of the design of their trucks, failed to trip hot box detectors. Builder EMD has told Amtrak that it believes faulty bearings were used in engines 900 thru 914. Because of this, Amtrak has begun a program of removing the trucks and replacing the bearings, beginning with engine 901. Work on 901-914 is being done at the Wilmington shops.....

NEW JERSEY INCREASED the leasing charge for Jersey Arrow cars to Amtrak, and so Amtrak is looking into replacing them with non-rebuilt Metroliner coaches on the Philadelphia-Harrisburg line. Starting Feb 2, trains 603 and 608 were being run with two Metrocoaches as a trial. All Metroliner trains between New York and Washington are now run with AEM-7's with Amfleet or GE-rebuilt Metroliner cars.....

AMTRAK'S MONTREALER GETS a 48-seat HEP diner effective Feb 17. The train will continue to run with an Amlounge and 60-seat Amcoaches for the present. On Jan 3 train 61 was delayed 2hrs, 40mins leaving Montreal because Amtrak's all-electric equipment froze up in the yard. The temperature in Montreal that day was 32° below zero F with a wind child factor bringing it to -52°. How did VIA survive if Amtrak's HEP equipment froze up "plugged in"?.....

AMTRAK'S F40PH DIESELS now number 200 thru 360. Twenty-two SDP40F's have been rebuilt by Amtrak's New Haven shops with 480-volt HEP run-thru cables, but retain their steam generators. These are to be used along with F40's on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED and the Florida trains. The SDP40F's have larger fuel tanks than the F40's and Santa Fe seems to like them better.....

AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION has leased six Amtrak E units--417, 420, 425, 430, 433 and 434--for extra power and as steam generators while their U36B diesels are being rebuilt.....

A THRU CHICAGO to New York Amcoach is expected to start operating on Apr 26 on the CARDINAL and a corridor train.....

★ ★ ★

PRICE OF GASOLINE went up quickly after President Reagan deregulated domestic petroleum prices in late January. Chevron raised the price twice already as of our last count. The highest-priced gasoline is now expected to reach about $2.00 a gallon by summer. Amtrak fares will be going up soon. An increase is coming on Apr 1, but Amtrak won't say yet how much it will be. Airline fares went up 40% in 1980, and consequently airline ridership fell about 5%, the biggest one-year drop ever recorded. The airlines are reporting financial losses for last year. There is a threat of the nation's becoming demobilized because all forms of travel will be too expensive. Amtrak's Alan Boyd pointed out recently that 60% of the cost of running an airplane goes for fuel, while only 15% of the cost of running a train is fuel. Thus when fuel goes up, airline fares must increase proportionally more than rail fares would.....

TRAINS OF TEXAS don't exist anymore, many people in that state think, according to a finding of Amtrak's Marketing Dept., assisted by TexARP. This is because so much publicity was given to the discontinuance of the LONE STAR in 1979. This is one of the reasons Amtrak is offering the special roundtrip fare on the INTER-AMERICAN during March and April.....

★ ★ ★

MORE SACRAMENTO RAILROAD Museum Dedication news: As we go to press, we have received a report that Southern Pacific has approved a plan to bring the 4449 steam locomotive from Portland OR to Sacramento CA for the May 2 dedication. Four excursions on the train are planned: Portland-Klamath Falls; Klamath Falls-Sacramento; Sacramento-Klamath Falls; and Klamath Falls-Portland, with 250 passengers carried on each leg. Return to the passenger's starting point would be via Amtrak. The steam runs themselves are expected to be SP, not Amtrak operations. Daily operation of the train while it is at Sacramento is also expected, during the nine-day event that begins May 2. An SP official indicated that altho it is SP's policy to discourage steam operation on its lines, this event is an exception, that other railroads will be participating, and that SP would not lose any money on it and would gain good public relations returns from it. Movement of the train requires a $10 million insurance policy, which will cost the railroad $18,000. In addition to the above, RTN has learned that a special train will run Oakland-Sacramento and return for the May 2 event, with stops at Richmond, Martinez and Suisun-Fairfield. Oakland departure will be 10am, with 12:20 arrival at Sacramento, leaving there at 4:35pm for a 7:05 Oakland arrival. Consist is to be an F40 locomotive and four Superliner coaches.....

EIGHTH STREET YARD in Los Angeles was the subject of a feature article in the December issue of Amtrak News. About 325 people work there, and Amtrak pictured about a third of them in the photo above. The article (written before Reagan's budget-cut plan) mentions plans for enlarging the facility over 4 or 5 years, as Chicago's yard has been enlarged and upgraded. Work will begin soon on an 1100-ft Superliner inspection pit. The yard services the SAN DIEGANS, the COAST STARLIGHT, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, the DESERT WIND, and the SUNSET LIMITED.....

★ ★ ★

THE AMTRAK SUPERLINERS have been getting modifications to their trucks to make them ride better. Early reports are that these changes are being very successful. We have little information yet about the nature of these modifications. Amtrak said that one Superliner went to the FRA test facility at Pueblo CO to test modified trucks. We'll have more on this next issue.....

THOSE BOMB BLASTS at New York's Penn Station last Dec 21, reported on in RTN 215, actually disrupted the schedules of 17 Amtrak trains and 49 Long Island Rail Road trains, according to further reports, rather than the 10 and 15 we reported.....

PORTAL DRAW BRIDGE in the NE Corridor's New York Division on a cold Dec 26 got stuck in a midway position after it was opened at 2:25am to let boats thru. Part of its mechanism got fouled by ice, and it took almost six hours to get it finally closed and locked, with a Coast Guard boat getting into the repair act. Nine Amtrak trains were cancelled, and others were turned at New York and Newark. On the following day the southbound NIGHT OWL pulled into New York and baggage car 1097 was attached to the rear of it. But the coupling proved to be improper, and the car detached, unknown to the engineer, while it was in the tunnel, and rolled to the bottom of the tunnel, where it was discovered. Two carmen were disciplined.....

★ ★ ★

THE NORTHBOUND MONTREALER was delayed 58mins in leaving Washington on Jan 5 because a baggage car loaded with mail for Chicago was discovered accidentally included in its consist.....

AIRLINE SEATING ARRANGEMENTS don't leave much to rave about, and a current radio ad by TWA, for its Ambassador Class for businessmen, calls it "less cramped" than any other airline's business class. It has to resort to a double negative to find a way of describing the seating room.....

THE PANAMA LIMITED on Jan 22 was detoured from Fulton KY to Milan TN (over the route of the former CITY OF MIAMI) and then over L&N from Milan to Memphis because of an IC freight derailment at Obien TN.....

NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD Amtrak trains are still mostly one- or two-Amcoach, loco-hauled trains. However, the other ROGER WILLIAMS unit, #28, was taken out of the New Haven dead line and repaired and as of Feb 1 is back in service. The SPV's, as noted before, are all out of service. On the Boston leg of the LAKE SHORE, some of

the new 4000-series handicap coaches are operating.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC has been earning so much money in incentive payments for running the COAST STARLIGHT on time (believed to be several million dollars per year) that the railroad has good reason to strongly oppose trimming the schedule of the train, which Amtrak would like to do. Observers look for SP to prime its Washington lobbyists for a big, quiet attack on Amtrak. Incidentally, the arbitration case on the proposed overnight train on the Sacramento-Los Angeles route is still not completed, Amtrak having recently presented a lengthy rebuttal to SP arguments against the service.....

POPCORN IS SOLD now in at least some Amtrak snack cars. The popcorn, in a foil container, is heated in a microwave over and pops, enlarging its container...

CENTRAL TOILET SYSTEMS in Superliner cars have reportedly been failing fairly frequently--8 or 9 Superliners were reported bad-ordered in Los Angeles around the first of February for this reason. Amtrak has had to itself manufacture the failing part in order to repair them.....

PULLMAN-STANDARD COMPANY has moved some of its Superliner construction and assembly from its Hammond IN plant to its Calumet facility on Chicago's far south side.....

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: The PANAMA LIMITED's 1971 derailment was at Fonti IL in June when a locomotive wheel locked and the train derailed at a switch, killing 10 passengers. Incorrect information was given in our item on page 15 of last issue.....

CARS & CONSISTS

The Amtrak domeliner RENO FUN TRAIN leaving Oakland CA on Feb 6 included Great Western Tours-owned private car "Shasta" carrying a tour group. RTN photo.

*The following cars are in storage at New Orleans (as of Feb 1) and are described as being in poor condition on the interior: 3850, 2152 "Silver Hyacinth", 3254, 3851, 3393, 3394, 1401, 3202, 3380, 3852, 2352 "Regal Isle", 3853, dome 9331 "Silver Veranda", 2369 "Regal Stream", 2365 "Regal Hill", 2362 "Regal Creek", dome 9813 "Silver Cup", 2302 "Hummingbird", 2772 "Columbia", 3392, 2350 "Regal Dome", dome 9372, 3375, 6020, 2864, 3221, 2850, 2312 "Fort Lauderdale", 3382, 3854, 3391, 3395, 3855, 3381, 5299, 2214 "Indian Lake", 5614, 10502 MofW car.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, New Orleans Jan 30: engines 2 SDP40F's nos. unknown; cars 1075, 2154 "Silver Orchid", 5652, 5433, 5678, 4534, 3322, 8040, 2751 "Palm Dome", 2675 "Silver Vale".

*United Southeastern Railways train 50, EL MERIDANO, Merida-Mexico City Jan 1: engine FUS 13; cars (all NdeM) 1447 baggage, 2560 Railway PO car, "Mar de Timor" slpr, coaches 4361, 4322, 4915, 4715, 4771.

*MONTREALER, train 61, Philadelphia Dec 20, 1980: engine 961 (E60); cars 1454, 2430 "Pacific Falls", 2086 slumbercoach, 20220 Amdinette, 28307 Amcafe, 21815, 21808, 21825, 21819, 21088, 4712, 4633, 20138 Amcafe, 21066 & 21094 84-seat Amco.

*RENO FUN TRAIN lv Oakland Feb 6: engines 615, 633, 622; cars Sierra Western 507 "Shasta", Atk 5408, 5414, dome 9479, 5422, 5665, dome 9457 "Silver Buckle", 3334, 3311, 5429, dome 9485, 5674, 5691, dome 9478, 5680, 5415.

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, Chicago Jan 31: engines 303, 302, 255, 301; cars 1223, 2884, 20233 Amdinette, 4000, 20029 Amcafe, Amcoaches 21879, 21204, 21232, 21203, 21166, Amclub 20123, Amcoaches 21200, 21081, 21206, bag-dorm 1624. (Last 9 cars carried a group of 600 to Dallas. Group left Dallas 11:59pm Feb 1 on #22 Extra, Dallas-Chicago nonstop except for fuel at Texarkana & St. Louis. Consist same as last 9 cars above, with engines 303 & 302.)

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Jan 28 (last conventional equip't run): engines unknown; cars 1114, 1551, dome 9482, 4525, 4483, 4522, 4893, 4502, 3313, 8062, 2660 "Silver Meadow", 2673 "Silver Boulder". (This train ran only Portland -L.A. as it had derailed in Portland on way north. Stub train with Superliners 34069, 31017 & 34057 ran Seattle-Portland to connect with it Jan 27. See last issue p. 17 for more details.) Train 11, San Jose Jan 29: engines 229, 530, 322, 236; cars 1230, 39921 Hi-level coach dorm, 31041 Superliner coach-bag, 34062 & 34090 coaches, 31003 coach-bag, 38035 diner, 32022 slpr. Train 14, L.A. Feb 3: engines 323, 320; cars 1216, Hi-level coach dorm 39916, Superliners 31041 coach-bag, 34096 & 34077 coaches, 31033 coach-bag as lounge, 38008 diner, 32022 sleeper.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"What it amounts to is when you're out of money, everybody's ox gets gored a little bit. Mass transit is going to get it, so are the highways, so are the airports, so is Amtrak. Everybody is going to share in this."

--Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis quoted in the Los Angeles Times, Feb 10.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The southbound train, now called the 'Panama Limited,' will be rechristened the 'City of New Orleans' on Feb. 1... Service on the 18-hour run will feature New Orleans cuisine of Crepes Bayou and Chicken Louisiana. Dining cars on each of the four-car trains will boast French Quarter decor with dining and lounge areas at opposite ends of the cars." --New Orleans Times-Picayune, Jan 21.

(But they aren't planning on many people riding it.)

NEWFOUNDLAND (continued from page 11)

Our train was 85 cars long with five diesel-electric engines which ran hood forward and did not resemble any I had ever seen before. Two other passengers were already in the coach by the time we climbed on. One was a man of about 65 going to Kittys Brook with his rifle to get a moose. He seemed well-known to the crew. The other was a man sprawled across facing seats in the smaller, darker front section of the coach, who occasionally yelled out an incoherent comment or question.

From the outside, the coach looked typical CN heavyweight: black and white with an orange "wet noodle" logo. It was number 758, definitely not to be confused with the car my 1976 Railway Passenger Car Annual lists as CN 758: a 1954 CCF "Cafe Lounge, ex-coach 3008, ex-coach 5463." It had 42 seats, 30 in one section, mostly reclining, and 12 in the other, separated partially by the glass dividers typical of most Canadian coaches. Oil-burning stoves at each end provided heat.

inner and outer windows opened independently.

At 2am I heard a carman call for a brake test on the radio, and at 2:20--Kerblam: we were on the move. Brakeman and parttime hobo that I am, I experienced more bone-jarring slack action in the following 272 miles of train riding than I had to date in my life. At intervals of between 30 seconds and two minutes during most of the trip, we could count on alternately being violently jerked forward as the train bunched up and being slammed backward as it stretched out. This train ride is definitely not for brittle people. On the other hand, it might do wonders as an alternative to a chiropractor.

At the spot where the passenger depot isn't, we stopped and picked up a man and woman berrypicking couple and then a few more at Deer Lake. The latter were French-Indians whom we couldn't understand most of the time, but who were very happy-go-lucky sorts in the process of getting happier and go-luckier with the beer they brought along. Consuming personal liquor is a definite no-no on Canadian trains, or in your back yard for that matter, but no one complained.

When daylight dawned, we found the scenery consisted of grassy meadows with brooks meandering about; patches of trees, mostly evergreens and larches; an occasional lake; and an almost total absence of civilization. At the summit, near a place called Gall Topsail, the yellowing larches were stunted--not more than six to eight feet high, attesting to brutal weather. This area had a strange feeling about it--it seemed as if it should be near the seashore.

When a hunter bags a moose, he loads it aboard an empty freight car and takes it home as his personal baggage--at no extra charge. The conductor said that they had brought about ten pre-fab cabins so far this year as baggage for homesteaders moving into the wilderness.

On this stretch of the line, the train is a "stop and pick up anybody anywhere" operation, as the Ontario Northland is north of Cochrane. At one such "anywhere" on the return trip, two young men got on with sacks full of rabbits they had been out trapping for a week.

Following the conductor's advice, we got off at the twin cities of Windsor/Grand Falls. He said there was nothing at Bishops Falls, and we certainly wanted to eat a hearty breakfast before the return trip. Grand Falls is named for waterfalls on the Exploits River which skirts the town. Its major industry is the Price-Newfoundland Ltd. newsprint mill which until recently, we were told, ran its own narrow-gauge railway to the port of Botwood.

"SWITCHING.

A card game like flat railroad switching at its best. Send $3.00 to Kangam, P.O. Box 3354, Kansas City, Kansas 66103."

Nearly everyone we met on Newfoundland Island was friendly and helpful to us as complete strangers, in spite of being bewildered by the idea of our coming all the way from Salt Lake City, Utah (wherever that is) to ride a train most of them don't even notice.

"We'd rather be on the train" bumper stickers at $1 each(2 for $1.75)are available from the MISSOURI - KANSAS RAIL PASSENGER COALITION, DEPT. RTN, P. O. BOX 1192, KANSAS CITY, MO 64141

WE'D RATHER BE ON THE TRAIN Amtrak

BACK ISSUES RTN is now offering our Tenth Anniversary Year volume, all the issues of 1980--18 issues sent all in one parcel at the price of $8 postpaid. Other back issues are also available and will be listed in upcoming issues, or write for information. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

NOVEMBER 1980 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE OVER 1979

Metroliners	130,956	-15.3
NE Corr Conventional	420,613	-6.4
Phila-NH-Springfld	23,712	-12.4
NY-Philadelphia	169,285	-18.0
Phila-Harrisburg	76,654	-14.1
NY-Harrisburg	27,163	45.9
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	848,383	-10.3
NY-Niagara Falls	55,492	-1.9
Chicago-St. Louis	7,647	-24.7
Chicago-Milwaukee	24,333	-9.9
Chic.-Detroit/Toledo	37,260	5.5
Chicago-Carbondale	16,852	10.1
Chicago-Quincy	9,860	2.0
L.A.-San Diego	90,229	6.1
Vancouver-Eugene	16,742	16.8
Washington-Cincinnati	10,313	39.9
Wash.-Martinsburg	19,933	-4.1
Oakland-Bakersfield	11,259	98.5
New York-Montreal	8,612	-15.7
Chicago-Port Huron	8,874	6.1
Chicago-Dubuque	3,163	-27.2
Chicago-Duluth	8,418	.6
Chicago-Valparaiso	15,776	-2.9
Chicago-Indianapolis	9,052	--
Chicago-Peoria	2,135	--
Chicago-Kansas City	16,172	58.9
Phila.-Pittsburgh	5,900	--
Portland-Eugene	3,483	--
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	381,505	10.6
Washington-Montreal	36,886	13.2
New York-Florida	49,187	-1.8
Chicago-NY/Washington	20,190	10.8
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	11,001	9.5
Chicago-Seattle	14,881	9.8
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	34,371	3.0
Chicago-Los Angeles	20,749	-.4
Chicago-New Orleans	15,493	-12.7
Chicago-Texas	18,772	22.2
L.A.-New Orleans	5,295	-14.3
L.A.-Seattle	39,694	2.1
Chicago-NY/Boston	26,079	19.9
Boston-Newport News	39,151	-31.7
New York-Savannah	32,851	-.5
Seattle-Salt Lake	13,198	-.2
New York-New Orleans	40,169	111.9
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	417,967	4.2
Special trains	5,651	328.8
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,653,506	-2.3

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

The above ridership figures, for November, arrived just after our last issue went to press. Amtrak train patronage continued to rise in November, except for the Northeast Corridor. An Amtrak spokesman said that ridership decreases there were due to slower schedules and delays caused by the Corridor reconstruction. Both short and long distance categories were up, compared to the same month of 1979. Note that it is now not necessary to make adjustments for discontinued routes, since it has been over a year since they were dropped. Trains that have no entries in the percent change column are ones that began operation during the past year, so no year-by-year comparison can be made. Amtrak continues to include the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and DESERT WIND data in one figure; separately, the SFZ had 24,325 riders and the DW had 10,046. Data for the Chicago-St. Louis route do not include the ANN RUTLEDGE, which presumably are given in the Chicago-Kansas City figure. Amtrak attributed the ridership increases on long distance trains to better on-time performance and the introduction of new and rebuilt cars. For the fiscal year as a whole--Oct and Nov--systemwide ridership was up 1.4%.

RAIL FANTRIPS

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. To be sure of entry in time, send full info at least 4 weeks before event. Be sure to address letter as follows: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Mar 7: Orange Empire Railway Museum's 25th anniv. open house, Perris CA. Railroadiana swap meet 9am-3pm. Rail book authors available to autograph books. Railway will operate. Free admission. Autograph party 1:30-3:30pm. (714) 657-2605.

May 8, 9, 10 & May 15, 16, 17: Cass Scenic RR, Cass, WV: railfan weekends with Western Maryland Shay #6. Railfan excursions, runbys, slide-movie show. Write: Railfan Weekend 1981, Cass Scenic RR, PO Box 75, Cass WV 24927.

May 16: The Tulip Train, Amtrak special train Chicago-Holland MI. Plus Chicago Railfan Banquet. Info: long SASE to: UNIRAIL, "Railfair '81", Box A-3258, Chicago, Illinois 60690.

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RAILROAD CLOTH EMBLEMS. Over 300 different types. Send $1.00 for two samples and list. Joseph Lajoie, P.O. Box 3, 22 Stevens St., Methuen, Mass. 01844.

THE PASSENGER AGENT presents a new collection of passenger train artifacts. First big list includes timetables, menus, cloth, ticketing and more! Send LSASE to: The Passenger Agent, Dept R, 1049 N. Leavitt St., Chicago IL 60622.

Eighty Alco and Baldwin steam locomotive builder plates: CRI&P, NYC, P&PU, TP&W US Hobbies FP45, SSAE for list. D Thompson, 517 E 12th Ave, Naperville, IL 60540.

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Rate The Trains

You can submit your ratings now on regularly-scheduled North American passenger trains (not commuter) that you have personally ridden recently. Give the date or approximate date of each trip so we can place ratings in the proper survey.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) listed below: (A) Your overall impression of the train, taking everything into account; (B) Service from operating crew (conductor, etc.); (C) Dining or snack crew service; (D) Lounge crew service; (E) Food quality; (F) Car mechanical condition; (G) Car cleanliness and housekeeping; (H) Condition of track & roadbed; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Condition of stations: (K) Appropriateness of type of equipment used.

Use the 9-point rating scale below. Do not use previous rating forms, as we have changed some of the categories. Put ratings on separate sheet from other correspondence.

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor — Average, acceptable — Extremely good

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

.....

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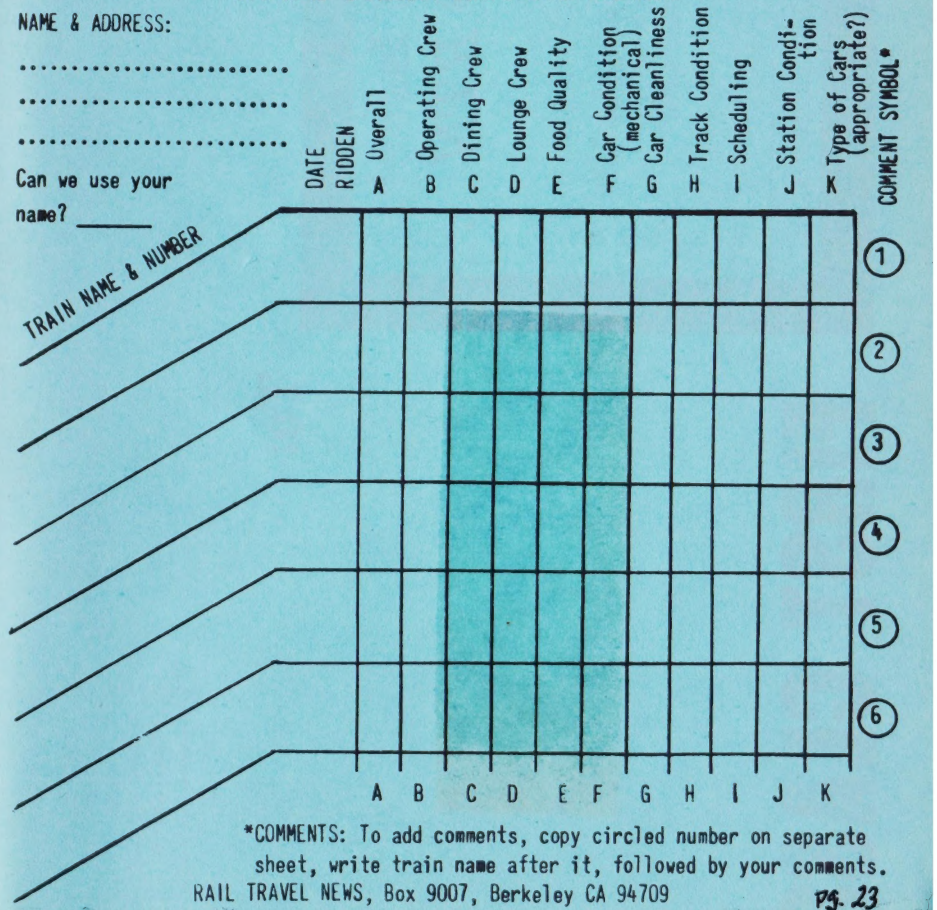
Can we use your name? _____



*COMMENTS: To add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

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